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SERMON,

PREACHED AT

No. 13
Saint Patrick's Chapel,

SUTTON-STREET, SOHO-SQUARE,

ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH THE 8TH, 1797:

THE DAY OF

SOLEMN FAST, HUMILIATION, &c.

BY THE

REV. ARTHUR O'LEARY.

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1797.



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“ Blow the trumpet in Sion; sanctify a fast: call a solemn assembly. Between the porch and the altar, the priests the Lord’s ministers shall weep and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare thy people: and give not thine inheritance to reproach, that the heathens should rule over them. Why should they say among the nations: Where is their God?”

JOEL, chap. ii. ver. 15. 17.

IT has ever been the custom amongst the people of God, to have recourse to him by prayer, humiliation, and fasting, in order to avert the calamities with which they were threatened. The law and the prophets command us to return to the Lord our God *in fasting and in mourning*. In opening the Gospel we must open our ears to the voice of the Baptist, who, from the bottom of a frightful wilderness, makes the neighbouring hills, and the banks of the Jordan, re-echo the awful

words, *Generation of vipers, who will preserve you from the wrath to come? The axe is already laid at the root of the tree, and every tree which brings not forth fruits meet for repentance will be cut down and cast into the fire.* In another place it is Christ himself who declares, that whoever *does not bear his cross and follow him, is not worthy of him, and that without penance, the sinner must perish.*

The Church, instructed by the example of Christ, and taught by the Apostles, has appointed this season of the year as a time of solemn expiation and preparation for a spiritual resurrection from sin, by the paschal communion. In a word: fasting and penance are ever inseparable from the spirit of religion. The State, threatened by foes, who, like those of the Israelites, after invading *our inheritance, would say among the people, where is their God?* concurs with the church, on this day in particular, in ordaining a solemn fast to appease the anger of the Lord—to implore his protection against impending evils—to exercise the severity of corrective justice on ourselves, in order to prevent the hand of God executing his judgment against our sins—to encourage and support the righteous in the practice of piety, of which prayer and fasting are both the exercise and nourishment—to induce *the wicked man to forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts,* (Isaiah c. 55.) and thus, by cherishing the piety of the faint, and reclaiming the sinner from his crimes, to render us all acceptable to our Maker. The benefit and obligations then of fasting, and its applicableness to the present occasion, are the subjects of this discourse.



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The first positive command God gave to man, was that of fasting or abstaining, when he enjoined him not to eat the forbidden fruit. Thus fasting, says St. Chrysostom, is coeval with the world, and saw the world in its cradle. Not indeed that man, in the state of innocence, stood in need of fast or abstinence, as the means of subduing passions whose influence he had not as yet felt, or of expiating sins he had not as yet committed. But being made with senses, God gave him a command relating to a sensible thing, to let him know that he had a master, to remind him of his obedience, to serve as a check to his desires, and as a caution to the sinner, in his state of misery and corruption, not to neglect a remedy which would have served the innocent, as an antidote in the state of holiness and integrity.

Let us read the annals of the world. Let us unravel the long chain of the most remote and venerable antiquity. In every page—at every period of time since the fall of man, what do I see? I see God exasperated against the sinner; and, the sinner, humbling himself by prayer and fasting, wrest the thunderbolt out of his hands. I see just and righteous men mortifying their bodies in order to advance in merit and perfection.

When the small remnant of mankind had quitted Noah's ark, God forbade the use of blood, as well to inspire them with horror for murder, as to dispose themselves and posterity for abstinence. The law being published—sacrifices instituted—religious rites and legal ceremonies, shadowing forth under the veil of figures, the sacrifice of
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the universal victim that was to be, one day, offered up for the redemption of the world—solemn days of expiation were appointed, on which the people of God were to afflict their bodies on pain of extermination. In a word, fasting, humiliation, sackcloth, ashes, penance, and amendment of life, are seen every where in the law and the prophets, as means, and the only means, of disarming offended justice. —

If it should be said, that such fastings and expiations were confined to the Mosaic dispensation, let it be remarked, that it was only the ceremonial part of the old law, such as ablutions, sacrifices, and other institutions and ceremonies figurative of the mystery of our redemption, that have been abolished. But such parts of the Mosaic law as are founded on the law of nature, such as to honour our parents—not to steal—not to commit murder, &c. are to remain in their full force, as long as mortals are in a state of trial under the control of a God every where present to hear their prayers, to help their endeavours, and to reward or punish them, according as they overcome or yield to their passions. For justice requires that the order which has been reversed by sensual gratification, should be re-established by penance, and in this sense Christ has declared that he came, not to abolish, but to bring the law to its perfection.

Hence, whether the Jews, who alone were bound by the law of Moses, or the Gentiles, such as the Ninivites, who were bound by the law of nature only, fasted, their fast was equally acceptable

able to God. Ahab, threatened by the prophet, humbles himself by fasting. The Lord defers, until after his death, the punishment with which he threatened his family. The Ninivites, enervated with ease and luxury, are threatened with utter destruction after a lapse of forty days. Their voluptuous monarch descends from his throne, covers himself with sackcloth and ashes—proclaims a general fast—is imitated by his subjects of every description—the Lord relents, and repeals the fatal decree.

What shall I say of Moses and Elias, fasting on solitary mountains to qualify themselves for heavenly revelations? What shall I say of David and Esther, mortifying themselves in the midst of palaces, the theatres of ease and luxury? What shall I say of the Redeemer of the world, who fasts for the space of forty days, to shew that fasting is a sacrifice wherewith none can be dispensed, whether righteous or sinners? Not the righteous, because they have temptations to conquer, and passions to subdue: sinners much less, because they have crimes to atone.

Let none then alledge the words of St. Paul, *Let none judge you in meat or drink, &c. (Coloss.)* nor that saying of our Saviour, so often quoted to serve the purpose of sensuality, *what enters by the mouth does not defile the soul.*

St. Paul alludes to the Jewish ceremonies and legal observances which some of the Jewish converts to Christianity attempted to mingle with the Christian religion, as is evident from his mentioning the *new moon and sabbaths*. And as to the say-
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ing of our Saviour, he alludes to the superstition of the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught their votaries that it was a grievous sin to eat without *washing their hands*. We know that what God created for the use of man is good, and that it is the prohibition of the law which constitutes the guilt. The precept of fasting runs through the whole series, as well of the New, as of the Old Testament. During the Mosaic dispensation, the people of God abstained from several meats, which the Christians never scrupled to use. Will any Christian say, that because they were good of themselves, the Jew would have committed no sin in eating them against the prohibition of the law? When Christ commands us to hear his church, and declares, "*that whoever despiseth her Pastors, despiseth himself*,"—when St. Paul commands us "*to obey those who have rule over us*,"—when he declares "*that power comes from God, and that whoever resisteth the powers ordained of God, resisteth God himself*," will any, (except an infidel, or some fanatic who is wilfully blind) fly in the face of common sense, and say, that a Catholic is not bound to fast and abstain at the stated times appointed by the Catholic Church, his instructor and guide? *But what difference is there between fish and flesh?* The sensualist who proposes the question will never give himself the trouble to make the experiment. A week's confinement to one meal on fish, would enable him to solve the question. If to fast answered no end but that of exercising our submission, and reminding us, that as sinners, we are liable to make an atonement, it would

would procure us the merit of humility and obedience.—There is no sporting with an authority which pleads the sanction of heaven, and commands nothing but what has a real and effectual tendency to mortify our sinful lusts and affections, purify the soul, and assimilate us to a crucified Redeemer, of whom St. Paul says, that we must *suffer with him, to share his glory*. Saul, king of Israel, imagined it no grievous sin to reserve, against the injunction of the Prophets, a few fat lambs out of the spoils of Amaleck. He reasoned, as I suppose every relaxed casuist does, who enters into a kind of collusion with a pliant and easy conscience. *To keep a few lambs out of an immense flock, whose owners are doomed to destruction, cannot be such a heinous offence*. Yet, for this very disobedience, God rejected him. *And Samuel said, hath the Lord so great delight in sacrifices as in obeying his voice: behold to obey is better than sacrifice; for stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry*. (Sam. Chap. 15.)

If fasting were but a new law made for the purpose of reforming our lives, and subduing our passions, *rebellion and stubbornness against it would be iniquity*; much more when it is consecrated by the practice of the people of God in all ages; by Moses and the prophets; by Christ and his apostles; by the Christians, who, in the primitive ages of the Church, fasted with a severity which change of times and circumstances induces the Pastors of the Church, much against their will, to relax. To Catholics there is no need of quoting Catholic authors. Persons of a different persuasion, who
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are strangers to the principles of the Catholics, whose doctrine is misrepresented, may read Doctor Gunning, Bishop of Ely, Bishop Montague, and other Protestant Bishops quoted by Doctor Gunning, who proves, from the concurrent testimonies of all the ecclesiastical writers of the primitive ages, that the fast of forty days of Lent is an apostolical institution, and lays down excellent rules for observing it.

We deplore the error of those who cavil at the laws of the Church, instead of admiring her wisdom and holiness. She knows that we are sinners, and as such liable to do penance. She knows, on the other hand (and to your own consciences I appeal if it be not true) that at any other season of the year, we think of nothing less than penance, and that of ourselves we would never resolve on it.—She appoints, then, this solemn season for the liquidation of our debts to Divine Justice, by a salutary compulsion. She knows that in our own passions we carry about us our domestic enemies. She therefore appoints fasting as the most efficacious means of acquiring spiritual strength to subdue them. The world, to its astonishment, knows that we are surrounded by foreign and inveterate foes, bent upon our destruction.

In imitation, then, of the people of God in all ages, the Catholics of these realms humble themselves, this day in particular, in union with the State, to implore the assistance of Heaven for the purpose of averting the calamities with which we are threatened. Calamities which, if merely confined to temporary inconveniences, the inevitable
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result of wars carried on between civilized nations, would not be so alarming; but this is a war in which every thing dear to man, in eternity as well as in time, is put to the hazard. Calamities which I would leave the historian to describe, were it not that *infidelity*, or a want of religion, their immediate and principal cause, falls within my province; and can never be better represented than by the calamitous effects of which it has been productive.

All law-givers, who have civilized nations and founded empires, gave energy to the notion of a Supreme Being stamped on the soul of man, and strengthened the bands of society by the dread of some superior and invisible power, to whom the murderer of the innocent—the perjurer—the parricide—is responsible beyond the grave. And the greatest ornament France ever produced, the immortal BARON MONTESQUIEU, a man illustrious for his birth, but more illustrious for his comprehensive genius, ornamented with all the sciences, who united the wisdom of the ancients to the refinements of the moderns, and to whom all the princes who will ever read *his Spirit of Laws*, can address the words an Emperor addressed to the shade of a famous statesman, on seeing his tomb. “*Arise, great man, and I will give you half my dominions, if you teach me how to govern the rest.*”^{*} The great Montesquieu, in his *Spirit of Laws*, demonstrates the happy influence of religion on civil society, restraining the absolute monarch from the abuse of unlimited power; curbing the despot,

* Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia, when he saw the tomb of Cardinal Richlieu.

as the chain binds the lion ; and carrying the mildness of European manners into the savage climes of Africa, where, on the confines of Abyffinia, the tyrant who ascends the throne begins his reign with the murder of his brothers ; whilst, in his neighbourhood, the prince who professes the Christian religion, finds his security in the confidence and love of his subjects, who, in return, are the principal objects of his care and attention.

Far from copying after such a model as Montesquieu, the unhappy law-givers of France, in removing the restraints of religion, gave a loose to all the passions. The flower of their clergy murdered or banished—the temples of the living God profaned—festivals, and especially the *Sabbath-day*, instituted to perpetuate to the end of time the belief of the creation of the world by the Sovereign Artist in whose honour that sacred day was consecrated, all the memorials which could remind the ransomed sinner of the benefit of his redemption, with the religion which gave them rise, being annihilated and destroyed, a kind of idolatry seemed to be substituted in their room ; not indeed that French republicans, less religious than the Pagans who believed in some false God, ever intended any worship after having abolished the worship established in honour of the true one. This was an idolatry not of weak credulity, but of abandoned wantonness. The words, gestures, and denomination, pointed out the false divinity. Nothing was wanting but the belief of her votaries to render the idolatry complete.

As if the hall of the National Convention were Milton's Pandemonium, where the infernal peers

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sat in council to deliberate on the means of de-throning the King of Heaven, a member of this meeting of regicides begins to harangue, and, in the midst of a burst of universal applause, denies the existence of a God, whilst the sun, which God had created, was dazzling the eyes of the beholders, and darting its beams on the blasphemer's head. To this monster succeeds a woman dressed in all the allurements of seduction, saluted by those new sovereigns as the Goddess of Liberty, who transfer to this living idol those signs of adoration they had refused to the Son of God, of whom St. Paul says, *at the name of Jesus let every knee bend*. Nothing was wanting but temples and sacrifices. Two churches, formerly consecrated to the eternal wisdom, were dedicated, one to *Liberty*, the other to *Reason*. It was reserved for Paris, that had improved in modern philosophy, to refine on the manner of worshipping the new created divinities, and to offer a sacrifice on their altars such as never had been offered up to Moloch, on the confines of ancient Canaan; nor to the god of war in the temple of Mexico, lined with human skulls interlinked with chains, made in the form of monstrous serpents, to give a more terrific aspect to the grim and horrible idol. In ancient Palestine, children were offered up by their parents, and amongst the ancient Mexicans prisoners taken in war were the only victims sacrificed in the face of terror. French philosophy gave birth to a new immolation unrecorded in the annals of time. The sun had quitted our hemisphere to avoid a spectacle which

which it had never beheld. It was in the obscurity of the night, so favourable to works of darkness, that the Jacobins met in a spacious church, converted into a club room, for debating on murder and politics. The pillars, the altars, as yet standing, the glimmer of tapers, which served as funeral torches, every thing contributed to give more awe to the solemnity of the sacrifice, when lo ! a French republican appears with his father's bleeding head, and pointing to it, exclaims, *Behold my father's head, which I cut off for not subscribing to our glorious constitution ; and, lo ! the sacrifice every true republican should make to liberty ! !*

History affords some gloomy instances of parricides who attempted to pollute their hands with their father's blood, from impatience to succeed to their crowns or fortunes ; but this is the only instance we read of in any history, whether sacred or profane, of a sacrifice wherein the son was the priest and the father the victim. Agamemnon, in going to the siege of Troy, sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia, to gain the favour of the gods, which gave occasion to the Epicurean philosopher, Lucretius, the model of our modern infidels, to attack religion in his famous epiphonema, or exclamation,

“ *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*”

As if he had said, *Accursed is that religion which could induce the father to sacrifice his child.* Modern philosophy, brought to the height of refinement
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in France, enables us to retort upon ancient as well as modern infidels.

“ *Tantum irreligio potuit suadere malorum.*”

Accursed is that irreligion! that infidelity which could induce the child to sacrifice the father! Agamemnon's misguided piety originated in a mistaken notion of religion, which has been rectified and corrected by Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light. But French principles convince us that, if a choice were to be made, between a false religion and none, even a false religion, with all its abuses, is preferable to infidelity, however dreadful the alternative. Thus, after shaking the foundations of society by irreligion, nothing was wanting but to plunge it into a chaos of pollution, by dissolving the sacred ties of marriage.

The wise Creator, who could have peopled the world in an instant, intended that all men should spring from one marriage, in order to be for ever one and the same family, however dispersed and multiplied. And Christ, bringing back marriage to its primitive institution, decreed, that what God has united, man should not separate; reforming thereby the abuse of divorces, and putting it out of the power of the capricious husband to banish the chaste mother of his child, to place a stepmother over him. Whatever may be said of the polygamy of men, the most abandoned nations, and the most ripe for the vengeance of Heaven, never authorised, by their laws, what France
has

has introduced into civilized Europe. As if the banks of the Seine, which runs through Paris, were the brinks of that lake on the borders of which the impure spirits, with our Saviour's permission, entered into the swine, the rulers of that monstrous republic passed a solemn law, whereby men and women, who wished to live together under the mask of marriage, were at liberty to separate from each other, not only with mutual consent, but even at the will of one of the parties, without any reason whatever, but the mere choice of either, and marry in succession as many as they chose. Thus they put it in the power of one wretched and abandoned woman to point out to twenty or forty husbands, all living. And thus they introduced a brutal confusion amongst mortals, confounding names and paternal rights which nature has ever respected;—peopling the earth with men uncertain of their origin, coming into the world without knowing who is their father, without a link of union, without tenderness, affection, or humanity; all in a state of becoming, by their very laws, a race of men incestuous or parricides, * or both. Thus, under the operation of such impure laws, in twenty years time, or less, a French republican may marry his sister, or kill his father in a duel, without knowing it: or should he know it, he will do it without remorse, upon the principles of a

* The author, from delicacy, refrained from making use, in the pulpit, of the words of one of the members of the present Directory, who declared, in his speech upon this occasion, that *France was an extensive market of human flesh.*

philosophical

philosophical and republican education. For what scruple or remorse can rising or future generations amongst them feel, in a country where every religious education is abolished; where, to use the words of one of their orators, *there is no creed but liberty, no gospel but equality*.—Where the best of religions is considered to be at most but an engine of policy, contrived by tyrants, under the appellation of kings, against whom they swear, once every year, *eternal hatred in the temple of Reason*. The only oath to which they are taught to pay any regard!

What scruple or remorse can be felt by young people bred up in scenes of slaughter and carnage, strangers to God's commandments, taught and explained in their father's time, in churches where nothing is now heard but republican songs, but which commandments are now antiquated, and represented by their philosophers as the frauds and cheats of an impostor. Generations unbaptized, initiated in the impure and impious maxims of Voltaire, whose remains, with those of other champions of infidelity, are placed in the temples from whence the shrines of the martyrs who died for Christianity are removed! Generations accustomed from their early days to read on the frontispieces of the gates of the dormitories of the dead, and in monumental inscriptions, that *death is an eternal sleep*. And thus, without any check to their passions, but the fear of temporal authority, without the sanction of religion, which makes *a man virtuous in the dark, and honest without a witness*, and in dread of no responsibi-

lity beyond this life, must consider the most enormous crimes and the purest virtues as so many unmeaning sounds, which die away like fainting echoes, and are confounded for evermore in the horrors of the grave.

Are these, then, the people with whom any Christian would wish to fraternize? Is it by a confederacy with such infidels that a British subject should be tempted to shake the throne of the best of kings, and overturn the mildest and wisest of constitutions? Is it with the assistance of the plunderers of the dead, and the robbers of the living, that any person could expect to meliorate or improve his condition? And if an English Catholic, to whom lawgivers and rulers who are long since resolved into their original dust, have transmitted restraints and disqualifications as a legal inheritance: If the Catholics of these realms, whose only crime is, that for more than a century before they were born, one of the Stuarts was dethroned by the family of Orange in Holland, which family in its turn is dethroned by Dutch and French republicans!—an awful instance of the vicissitudes of human affairs, which should inspire princes with humanity and compassion for the wretched, when they not only know that they are doomed to die, as other mortals, but moreover exposed, from the inconstancy of fortune, to survive their power and splendour; go, said Marius, once the master of Rome and the conqueror of the Cimbri, *go and tell the governor of Africa that you have seen Marius perishing with hunger on the ruins of Carthage*; alluding to the

the instability of human grandeur in the downfall of such a powerful state, and the change of his fortune: If a Catholic, I say, who is allowed only a peaceable existence and toleration of worship, under the safeguard and protection of the laws, without any other benefit from a constitution framed by his ancestors, thinks it his bounden duty to support his king and country; with what zeal then should not his countrymen, of a different persuasion, defend and support a government and constitution, the blessings and benefits of which they enjoy in their full extent and plenitude.

If there be hardships and inconveniences attending a calamitous war, they are hardships and inconveniences inseparable from a state of struggle and self defence, against men such as I described, who, after overturning a kingdom, which they drenched in the blood of its inhabitants, declared war against all established governments, and solicited the subjects of all states to rebel against their Sovereigns.

Their famous decree shall ever stand upon record as a testimony against them, and a justification of the princes and states who armed in their own defence, and attempted to check a torrent which threatened to bear down the mounds of that order in which subjects find their happiness, and kings their security. By their decree they declare that they are willing *to give assistance to all who are willing to procure liberty*. By this decree the desperate—the licentious—the dissolute of all nations, who, like Cataline's associates, would wish

the overthrow of their respective countries, in order to enrich themselves with the spoils of the peaceable and virtuous, were sure to find allies and confederates. And yet those allies have not enriched the malcontents or disaffected of any state subdued by their arms.—The spoils of towns and cities were appropriated to themselves, or sent to Paris; and the blessings conferred by such conquerors are visible in all those provinces, where former scenes of peace and plenty are changed into deserts, and the prospect of smoking ruins can alone distinguish the solitudes of nature from the desolation of the Vandal.

Our hardships are temporary, and to be borne with as other calamities with which God in his justice sometimes visits mortals, either for the punishment of their sins, or the amendment of their lives, or the trial of their patience. Let an all-ruling Providence, by a change of times and circumstances, by the energy and wisdom of rulers, and means best known to him who either protects, sets up, or pulls down kingdoms and empires, remedy the evils of which people may complain. But to attempt to remove them by deeds of darkness—by opposition to lawful authority—by the assistance of men abandoned to irreligion and licentiousness—is to plunge into the gulph of destruction.

But there is little need for a dissuasive from any wish to fraternize with such confederates, to a congregation instructed in the principles of a Gospel which every where enforces subordination, and submission to the reigning powers. Infidels and fanatics

fanatics may deride such a doctrine as the doctrine of slavery, especially when preached by a Catholic clergyman. Forbid it, Heaven! that I should ever take any other instructor for my guide, than him who says, *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*; or for my model any other than St. Paul, who announces to the world, *that power comes from God, and that whoever resisteth the powers ordained by God, resisteth God himself*.

This is the doctrine he taught when tyrants and persecutors swayed the sceptre, without giving his sanction to oppression or injustice, princes being a *terror, not to the good, but to the wicked*. How much more would not he enforce this doctrine under a prince who, as he knows that the original source of authority comes from the people, so he exercises this very authority for his people's happiness—enforces the respect due to religion by his power—banishes disorder and licentiousness by his example—prefers goodness to glory, and the acquisition of the hearts and love of his subjects, to triumphs and conquests.

Under such a king, who, but the avowed enemy of public order and private happiness, would not startle at the most distant thought of changes and commotions, which would inevitably involve himself and his country in calamities similar to those which have overwhelmed that land which literally answers Job's description, *a land of darkness and the shadow of death, where no order but horror abides*: where religion is become a crime, and private property treason against the State: where from the mouth of the Loire to the banks of

the Rhone, the whole kingdom resembled a field of battle, strewed with the bodies of the slain after a bloody contest between two contending armies : where the living were afraid to perform the funeral rites to their murdered relatives, removed, half putrified, in cart-loads, attended by furies, singing republican songs ; and where the groans of the dying, under the hands of assassins, in one place, and the music of theatres in another, exhibited the strangest mixture of mirth and murder, all the horrors of a civil war, and all the licentiousness of the most abandoned security.

But the justice of God did not permit the first authors of these horrors to go unpunished ; their hands reeking with blood, they turned their fury against each other—for even in this life crimes do not always go unpunished. If thousands of virtuous people have perished in France, thousands of wicked men have also perished. In those great chastisements whereby the righteous receive new degrees of purity, the wicked also are exterminated. The same instrument of death which sent to the hall of the Heavenly Bridegroom, the innocent nuns of St. Dennis, guilty of no crime but the nobleness of their birth, after having consecrated themselves in the bloom of their youth to the immortal spouse—the same instrument sent the *impure Orleans* before the throne of that King, of whose kingdom it is written, “ *nothing defiled shall enter therein.*” The same executioner who tied on the scaffold, and sent to that crown reserved for suffering innocence, the spotless Princess Elizabeth, in whom her relentless judges could dis-

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cover no fault, but her answer that she was *aunt to the king*—the same executioner let the axe fall on the necks of Robespierre and his fellow tyrants, and sent them all fuming with the promiscuous blood of the innocent and guilty, before the tribunal of him in whose Scripture it is written, *judgment without mercy to him who does not shew mercy*. Thus it happens, that the same strokes which separate the pure grain, bruise also the chaff: and the same fire which refines the gold, burns the straw. And in this numerous congregation, should there be any disaffected person, misled by the notion that, in the event of an invasion, he would have a chance of enriching himself by rapine and murder, let me remind him, that, to his cost, he may too late discover his error: for in such a juncture, the honest—the virtuous—the generous—the wise—would associate for their mutual defence against the attempts of the wicked. And may I furthermore add, that the most indigent peasant in England, with his coarse fare, under the protection of the law, is happier than the most opulent ruler in France, who considers himself every instant as a victim devoted to the slaughter. What tranquillity can be enjoyed by nine hundred tyrannical usurpers, who have sent their predecessors, more powerful than themselves, to the scaffold, continually in dread of each other, imagining to see the sharpened poniard pointed to their own breasts? It is the tranquillity of a Cromwell, flying from one apartment to another, and concealing from his wife the bed in which she was to sleep the
night

night following ; or the peace and enjoyment of the guest who, at a tyrant's table, perceived a sword suspended by a hair over his head.—I know that the unexpected success of licentious infidels, who have destroyed religion in the unhappy land that gave them birth, seems to shake the faith of the unsteady, and to increase with additional shades the darkness of fanaticism, already prophesying the impending destruction of the Catholic Church, and the final close of the succession of her pastors in the person of the present Pope.

Let any person read the history of the people of God, and the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and he will see how often God has permitted the most wicked nations to chastise his chosen people. He will see him conducting victorious monarchs by the hand to overthrow surrounding nations, not sparing even his own sanctuary—his glorious temple, consumed by the fire of the Assyrians—its treasures conveyed to Babylon by the ravagers, headed by an impious tyrant—Babylon afterwards destroyed by the sentence of God, who orders Cyrus by his name, long before he was born, to open her brazen gates, foretelling, *That doleful creatures shall dwell in the stately palaces of her kings, that she will be changed into a pool of water ; and I will sweep Babylon with the bezom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Let the prophecy be compared with what we read in ancient history, and there we see it literally fulfilled. Not a vestige of this proud and criminal city, the type of Paris, for murder, plunder, and impiety, can now be discovered by modern travellers.

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We see in the person of her wicked, and at the same time victorious king, what these men are, called conquerors. They are for the most part but instruments of the divine vengeance. God exercises his judgments by them, and then exercises it over them. Nebuchadnezzar, vested with his divine power, and become invincible by that ministry, punishes all the surrounding nations, and is himself reserved for his Almighty arm; as the rod with which the father had chastised his child, when withered, is cast into the fire. The success of the wicked, then, is no proof of the justice of their cause, or of their being the favourites of heaven, which employs them as scourges to reclaim the sinner by chastisement, or to try and purify the righteous. And if they conquer the world, to their conquests can be applied the saying of St Augustin, that great kingdoms, acquired by violence and injustice, are great robberies. *Sine justitia, magna regna sunt magna latrocinia.*

As to the destruction of the Catholic religion, and the end of the succession of its pastors in the person of the present Pope, the prophecies foretelling such an event are proved by time to be the deliriums of an imagination bewildered by the prejudices of education, or overheated by enthusiasm. Or they are the artifices of impostors, who sported with the weakness of the ignorant and credulous, to render them subservient to their designs.—Numbers of such prophets appeared amongst Jews, Turks, and (which is still more astonishing) amongst Christians; and their pretensions to revelation and prophecy have contributed

buted to subvert kingdoms and lay cities in ashes ; as it is evident from the conduct of Barchebas, the Jewish prophet and impostor, with several others, down to Muncer, who, in order to stir up the German Boors against their princes, prophesied that he would receive in his sleeves all the balls which would be fired at his followers.

Luther prophesied that in the space of two years after his revelations there would be no more Popes. The numbers of Popes who appeared since his time, are proofs of the credit such prophets deserve. Who could take a review of the motley groupe of prophets who have started up since ! some of them divines, some mathematicians and astronomers, and a greater number mechanics, as *Hermanus Sutor*, whose character and mode of prophesying may be read in Alexander Ross's view of different religions ; all prophesying, and with equal authority, the speedy end of the Pope and Catholic Religion, from the Revelations of St. John, which they have changed into a field of battle to attack Antichrist. Whiston had prophesied the final end of the pontifical succession, and the overthrow of popery to happen in the year 1704. Swift, whose versatile genius was equally fitted for the grave and ludicrous, composed a ballad on Whiston, to be sung in the style of a triunello, with three voices alluding to the three-fold character of Whiston, as a mathematician, astronomer, and prophet. This ballad has brought prophecy into such discredit, that no prophet of note has started up in England these fifty or sixty years, until *Brothers*, who lately prophesied the
total

total overthrow of London in the year 1796. Prophefying is now confined to lunatics and the editors of almanacks. To the prophefying doctors and philosophers who have found out the Pope in the beast or antichrist of the Revelations of St. John, Gibbon, the author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, pays a very unhandfome compliment in the persons of those who first pointed out to them this fountain of inspiration, when he said, *they never would have adopted the Revelations of St. John as canonical, but that it afforded them an opportunity, from obscure texts, to cavil at the church of Rome, and that they were fanatical hands which attempted to pull down the venerable structure of ancient superstition.*

Thus, by the intemperate zeal of such visionaries, however learned in other respect, and to their perversion of scriptural texts, they expose the sacred oracles to the derision of infidels, and entangle themselves and their readers in a maze of confusion and absurdities, by applying to the Christian Bishops of Rome, either loaded with chains or bleeding on scaffolds, for the sake of Christ, or peaceably enforcing the laws of discipline and morality amongst their clergy: to such Bishops these visionaries apply Christ's description under types and allegories, partly of the horrors of Pagan Rome, under her monstrous Cæsars, partly of Antichrist at the end of the world, and multiply into as many Bishops as there have been Popes, one single extraordinary character, as famous for unbounded wickedness as for unlimited power, whom St. Paul in the second chapter of his second epistle

to

to the Theſſalonians calls *the man of ſin, the ſon of perdition, who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is God, and whom Chriſt at the end of the world will deſtroy with the ſpirit of his mouth, and the brightneſs of his preſence.** Will any man but ſuch as works himſelf into an enthuſiaſtic delirium ever attribute ſuch impiety and power to ſuch men as Pope Benediſt the XIV. or Pope Ganganelli; men revered by all Europe, as much for the amiableneſs of their manners, and their ſpotleſs lives, as for their erudition.

Since the Apoſtolical ages, all the nations on earth which have been converted to the Chriſtian faith, have received it from zealous Apoſtolical miſſionaries, in communion with the Biſhops of Rome. A St. Auguſtin, ſent by Pope Gregory to England; a St. Patrick, ſent by Pope Celeſtine to Ireland; a Xaverius to China, &c. &c. &c. Is it then from *Antichriſt, whom Chriſt will deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming*, that we have received the knowledge of Chriſt, the Lord's prayer, the commandments of God, the Apoſtle's creed, the truths of eternal life? Hence the moſt learned of the Proteſtant writers, Grotius, Le Clerc, Light-foot, and numbers of others, though not in communion with the Apoſtolical ſee, could not diſcover the Pope in the perſon of Antichriſt in the Revelations of St. John. And indeed thoſe who pretended they had diſcovered the truth, through clouds and miſts of figures and allegories, and yet diſbelieved the cleareſt texts of Scripture, wherein

* 2 Theſ.

Christ commands us "to hear his church," promising to be with her "*at all times, even to the end of the world,*" have only contributed to swell the deplorable catalogue of the errors of the human understanding. They resemble the obstinate traveller, who quits the high road at noon-day, and strikes into a dark forest, impenetrable to the brilliant rays of the sun, to grope his way amidst briars and thickets. Texts, which can never be too frequently inculcated in an age of incredulity: *The gates of hell shall not prevail against my church. I will be with her pastors always, even unto the end of the world.* It follows therefore, of consequence, that though individuals may apostatize, and princes, with the greatest part of their subjects, fall off, the church of Christ, governed by her lawful pastors, can never err. What a disparity between such plain and obvious texts, and those mystical ones of the Revelations! *I saw a beast rise out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns. I saw horses, and out of their mouth came fire and smoke and brimstone, and their strength was in their mouth and in their tail.* (Revel. chap. ix.) *I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, and she was drunk with the blood of the martyrs, and she sitteth on a beast with seven heads and ten horns. And the seven heads are seven mountains, and the ten horns are ten kings, and behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* (chap. xvii.) *The number of the beast is the number of a man, and the number is three hundred threescore and six.* (Revel. chap. xiii.) Behold the arsenal from which pretended prophets take their offensive weapons to attack the Catholic church,
dressing

dressing the Roman cardinals in the purple of the
 Cæsars of Pagan Rome, spilling the blood of the
 martyrs, amongst whom the Popes themselves
 were the most conspicuous and illustrious victims
 for the faith of Christ, and finding in the mystical
 number *three hundred threescore and six* Antichrist,
 in those very holy Bishops of Rome who suffered
for the faith of Jesus, as if this number could not
 be found in the numerical letters of the name of
Mahomet in Greck, MAIOMETES, or *Julian* the
 Apostate, JULIAN CÆ. AUGUS.

What shall I say then of those divines who from
 the Revelations have prophesied the downfall of
 the Catholic religion, and the annihilation of her
 supreme pastor, at periods which they themselves
 out-lived without seeing their predictions accom-
 plished? What shall I say of those philosophers
 who attempted to fathom the depths of religion,
 and who, though they could not find out the longi-
 tude, co-existing with themselves in visible nature,
 pretend to pierce the veil of futurity? What am I
 to say of them? I shall say what Cicero said of the
 philosophers of his time, *that there was no opinion*
so extravagant which had not some philosopher to sup-
port it. Or what St. Paul afterwards said, *they*
became vain in their imaginations, professing them-
selves to be wise, they became fools. For what
 greater folly, when God has revealed his will to
 mortals, than to refuse submission to that guide he
 has appointed to instruct and direct them in the
 road to eternal life?

But they were learned men—So were Porphyry
 and Celsus, who attacked the Christian religion in
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the earliest ages. Bayle, who, amongst the moderns, refused to take religion for his guide, was a man of learning also, and yet he acknowledges the weakness and insufficiency of reason, which he compares to the Penelope of the poet, doing and undoing, weaving and unravelling the same web. Spinoza was also a learned man, and yet he admitted no God but the mass of material nature. Thousands of divines, from the first ages of the church down to our days, were very learned men, believing the Scriptures to be divinely inspired, and yet adducing these very Scriptures in support of the most monstrous and extravagant errors. Hence we behold philosophers and divines proving by their learning and errors that *whoever is a searcher of majesty will be overpowered with glory*, and that in matters of faith we must be guided by that authority which God has appointed, and commanded us to hear, viz. *his church*, built upon the rock, secure in the promises of Christ, *that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her*. Governed by lawful pastors under one visible head, she is the centre of Catholic unity. Her pastors can prove an uninterrupted succession up to St. Peter, where the chain of religion is resumed through the succession of the high priests up to Moses and Aaron—thence to the Patriarchs—thence to the first man—to whom was made the revelation of a REDEEMER, the *middle link* of that *grand chain* which unites the faithful of the old and new covenants—establishing the rulers of his church—extending their dominion over the souls of men by his sacraments—by the power he gives them to reconcile

cile penitent sinners to God, *as my living father hath sent me, so I send you*—ratifying in Heaven the sentence pronounced on earth, and promising *to be with them at all times, even unto the end of the world.*

To these pastors he has promised his unerring spirit; and if the mind of man, naturally fickle and inconstant, stands in need of a guide in the way of eternal salvation, where can a safer guide be found than the church, to whom Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light, has made such plain and infallible promises, without the smallest allay of the obscurity of figures and allegories? Rousseau, the profoundest reasoner and most eloquent amongst ancient or modern free-thinkers, acknowledges it. When the Calvinists of Geneva had burnt his Emilius, he informed them, “that he was as much authoris’d to separate from them, as their ancestors had been to separate from the Catholic church: and that in matters of religion, men must be guided either by the light of reason, which is the religion of nature, or if there be a revelation, he must be guided by authority; when, therefore,” continues he, “you convince me of such a revelation, from that time forward I will become a Catholic.”

Instead then of having my faith shaken by declamations and pretended prophecies, I will say, with Dryden, who after deriding the Catholic religion from ignorance, embraced it from conviction.

“But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide

“For erring judgments an unerring guide!

“Thy throne is darkness, in th’ abyss of light,

“A blaze of glory which forbids the sight.

“O, teach me to believe thee thus conceal’d,

“And search no farther than thou hast reveal’d.

“But

" But her alone for my director take,

" Whom thou hast promis'd never to forsake."*

Volumes may be written, and libraries filled with books against popery—fanatics may prophesy—modern Goths and Vandals may desolate provinces, and bury cities in their ruins—the temporal sovereignty of Rome, originally the gift of temporal princes, may be destroyed, and Rome herself undergo the fate of Carthage, and may be known only in history—the Pope's head may be carried on a pole, and the Turkish Soliman's threat, that he would feed his horse with oats on St. Peter's altar, may be carried into execution ; but the spiritual supremacy of Rome, and the succession of the lawful pastors, with whom Christ promises to be to the end of time, can never be destroyed by all the powers on earth. They are neither riches, nor opulence, nor temporal power, or grandeur which their master has promised them. Such promises are unworthy of a Man God, born in a stable to purchase us an eternal kingdom. Should one pastor be beheaded, another, with the same spiritual power, and title to the chair of unity, will be elected, either on the brink of a lake where Peter received the commission to feed Christ's flock, or in some subterraneous vault in times of persecution, (if such should happen) as well as in the magnificent palace of the Vatican. Hence, in the primitive ages of the church, when the Cæsars, masters of the world, after crucifying St. Peter, and behead-

* Hind and Panther.

ing St. Paul, exerted all their power against the faithful, with more fury than against the barbarians, who threatened to subvert the empire; some Popes were doomed to work as slaves in the mines—others to feed and tend wild beasts, for the diversion of the tyrants—and most of them put to death. For the space of three hundred years, the steps of the pontifical throne (if a throne it could at that time be called) were dyed with the blood of its Pontiffs. The Cæsars, at whose nod the world trembled, are now *no more*! All the kingdoms and republics recorded in ancient history, are now but so many *wrecks* of the *Roman empire*, which had swallowed up all others—governed by the absolute will of those formidable oppressors. In the space of eighteen hundred years, all the kingdoms and empires on earth have *changed* their laws, their customs, and the lineal succession of their rulers. Some have abolished royalty and assumed a republican form of government. Others, from free states, are become slaves to despotic power. Some, after a lapse of ages since their conversion from idolatry to the truth of the gospel, have quitted the road which their first apostles, by signs and miracles, had pointed out to them, and have struck into bye-paths: seduced by error or passion, they changed their names with their creed, and assumed names either from the first authors of their errors, or from their local situation. The Catholic Church alone has seen them rise and fall; she has outlived them, without either altering her doctrine or the succession of her pastors.

All

All the sects that have ever appeared, since Christ gave her commission to preach his gospel, and promised her his presence and assistance, found her established before them. The ancient schismatics separated from her pale, and the modern sectaries are sprung from those who formerly belonged to her. She subsists in spite of the tyrants who have persecuted her—or the heretics and false preachers who have attempted to corrupt or alter her doctrine—or the dastardly traitors who have basely betrayed her—or her unworthy children who have dishonoured her by their vicious and criminal lives. A flourishing State has been frequently buried in the same grave with the monarch by whose wisdom or valour it was supported; because the success of human measures depends on human means and human wisdom. But the church of Christ, resting solely on his infallible promises, and her faith being unalterable, the very vices and weaknesses of some of her pastors, could never shake or change her doctrine. Though some of her branches have been lopped off, the sap will for ever remain and shoot up in the most distant regions—flourishing in some places—tolerated in others—persecuted under various states, but with a never varied succession. By her very name *Catholic*, or *Universal*, it is evident to the whole world that she is appointed to be the church of all ages and nations, and that to her was given the fullness of the Gentiles, making use of all, as St. Augustine says, for the benefit of all, and as a demonstration of her perpetuity. She makes

use of the Pagans, as the subjects of her conversion ; and of the Jews, as a mark of her excellence. She is raised on the ruins of the synagogue, which was confined to a limited place, and circumscribed within a certain period of time ; whereas, to her no bounds as to time or place are prescribed, but the remotest borders of the earth, and the consummation of ages. She makes use of those who have renounced her doctrine, as a proof of her stability ; and of those who retain her sacraments and doctrine, but still refuse obedience to her as visible head, as a proof of her unity. And yet, in her mystical rites, and the solemnity of her religious worship, they all become the objects of her love and tenderness. Besides her ordinary prayers, she appoints the day on which the Saviour of the world died, to pray in a especial manner for their conversion, and opens to all a door of grace and admittance into her mysteries, by forming the faith of some, or reforming the errors of others, and affording to all the means of coming to the knowledge of the truth and eternal life—by her prayers—her sacrifice—her sacraments and instructions. My holy mother the church hath, then, an everlasting stock which can never fail. She shall ever be immoveable and invincible under her lawful pastors, until, all her children being gathered in, she be transported into the heavenly Jerusalem, her true dwelling place. She may be persecuted, but it shall be without danger of destruction ; for to her alone permanency is promised. She will therefore behold all kingdoms and empires buried
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in their own ruins; for all kingdoms and empires must perish, and be annihilated, whereas Christ has set no other limits to her duration on earth, but the end of the world.

This is a promise he has not made either to sects, whom he permits; or to empires or states, whom he sets up or pulls down; and whose revolutions and vicissitudes afford us an awful lesson of the vanity of human grandeur; for when we see the greatest kingdoms and empires fall, as it were, one upon another: when we see kings and queens, a few years ago the idols of their subjects, eclipsing, by their glory and splendour the pomp and magnificence of Oriental grandeur:—when we see them bleeding on scaffolds, and deprived even of those funeral rites which a respect for our nature, which is to rise one day immortal, and which christian decency should induce us to grant to the most forlorn object, we are convinced that uncertainty—inconstancy—and agitation, are the proper portion of all sublunary affairs; and that there is no solid happiness in this world but in a deep sense of religion, which purifies the soul by a virtuous and holy life, and unites it to God, the only source and fountain of unchangeable felicity.

It is a want of this sense of religion that has been the main-spring or fountain of all those calamities which have deluged an ill-fated neighbouring kingdom, and for the deprecation whereof we are *this day* assembled. For what, but the darkest infidelity, could have prompted to the banishment or murder of the flower of the *French* Clergy;

clergy? amongst whom, in the promiscuous slaughter, fell under the hands of assassins, *prelates*, bending under a weight of virtues and years: *Sacred orators*, who carried the severe but sublime truths of the Gospel into the luxurious palaces of emperors and kings; and who, like so many St. Pauls, made rulers tremble on enlarging upon *judgment, justice, and chastity*: (Acts iv.) *Clergy*, to whom in justice it must be acknowledged, by those who know them, that they have at all times *contributed* more than any other order of men to the *support* of the state, and *relief* of the poor, and at last made the generous offer of their privileges and immunities for the good of the community, content to remain, as primitive apostles, to superintend their flocks.

The idolatrous Israelites could not bear their prophets: and the abandoned infidels could not abide the very sight of a minister of the Gospel, whose presence, even in silence, reminded them of the condemnation of their deeds of darkness. A neglect of the duties of religion—the profane wit of the pretended philosopher preferred to the Evangelical simplicity and Apostolical zeal of the minister of the Gospel—an inundation of licentious writings, bearing down the mounds of faith and virtue, the firmest support of states, and the strongest fences of rank, subordination, and property—these disorders, encouraged by the example and applause of numbers of their nobility, prepared the way for a revolution, which buried their own splendor with the throne of one of the best and mildest of their kings, under the ruins of
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the altar, neglected by themselves, and derided in the writings of infidelity, calculated to shake their faith and poison their morals. Thus, as in the human frame, we all carry within ourselves the seeds of our dissolution, which vegetate insensibly until they attain to that maturity which makes us fall into the grave, some sooner, some later, but all infallibly at a determined time, foreseen by Him alone who has reckoned our days and given us existence ; so kingdoms and empires bear in their bosoms the causes of their own destruction, in the crimes and vices of their inhabitants. The destruction of the antediluvians by the deluge : the destruction of the criminal cities consumed with fire from Heaven, and which God would have spared if only a few just and righteous persons were found in them : the destruction of the Canaanites, whose land the Almighty did not give to his chosen people until the wicked inhabitants had filled up the measure of their iniquities, and numberless instances more, are striking proofs that there are national crimes which determine divine justice to punish kingdoms, or blot them entirely from the face of the earth. Not that in destroying kingdoms and empires he always destroys the land which is the work of his hands, but he destroys or humbles the inhabitants on account of their own works, the works of sin and corruption. And as the measure of national crimes is filled up with the accumulated sins of individuals ; woe to the man who by his sins hastens the general calamity in which he himself must sooner or later be involved ! Let us benefit by the example and mis-
fortunes

fortunes of others. Dissoluteness, the neglect of God and the means of salvation, infidelity, the prolific parents of all kinds of horrors, and the corruption of the heart by criminal pleasures, which made an idolator of a Solomon, and infidels of so many Christians, bring down the vengeance of Heaven upon kingdoms and empires. *There were then effeminate people in the land, says the scripture. They did according to the abomination of the Gentiles, and they forgot their God; their captivity and dispersion were therefore the consequence.*

I know that general calamities, and the revolutions of States, in which the multitude are concerned, do not come so home to each individual as to make a deep and lasting impression, especially when the scenes of such calamities are laid at a distance, either with regard to time or place. I must then, my brethren, summon your attention to a revolution of infinitely more consequence and importance than all the revolutions which have happened on the face of the globe; a revolution, in which each of my hearers is personally concerned;—a revolution, of which each of my hearers is to be witness. It is no less than a total change and destruction of the present world, the loss of all the comforts and pleasures of this life, except such *comforts as arise from virtue*: nay the loss of life itself. *When will these things happen? (said the disciples to our Saviour) and when will be the end of the world?*

It will happen to each of us at the hour of death, which will bring us to the gates of eternity, and to the entrance of either of two kingdoms; the
one

one of light, the other of darkness : the one of bliss, the other of misery ; where the condition of each will be invariably fixed according as we qualify ourselves in this school of trial : changed once, never more to undergo any revolution or change—for it is alike to us, whether the sun be eclipsed to shine no more, as at the end of time ; or whether our eyes, closed by death, are never more to behold the bright luminary of day : to feel the earth totter under our feet, and to witness the last convulsion of expiring nature, with the multitude who are to share the same terrors, or, on a bed of pain and sickness, to feel the soul quitting the fast embraces of the body in the last convulsive agony of life : to hear the *voice of an archangel and the trump of God* summoning to judgment : *arise O ye dead and hasten to judgment* ; or to hear the minister of Christ addressing the departing soul now on the point of hearing its doom : *depart from thy body, O Christian soul, in the name of God the father, who created thee ; may thy abode be this day in Paradise ; and may Christ the true shepherd reckon thee for ever amongst his flock* :—to see the sign of the Son of Man displayed in the air, or to see his cross presented to me as the last object on which I am to cast my eyes, already beginning to grow dim with the mist of death, in order to guard against despair and despondency, by reminding me, that however grievous my sins and offences, the judge before whom I am going to appear is the Redeemer who died for me. One instant more and the curtain drops, the scene of life is closed, all the kingdoms and empires on
earth

earth are no more with regard to us. *The fashion of the world passeth away*, says St. Paul. It is but a fleeting shadow. Behold then, my brethren, the end of all the cares, enterprizes, and revolutions of this life—*death and eternity*.

As citizens, it is our duty to pay due obedience to the reigning powers, and contribute to the support of the State. As Christians, we are under an obligation of still greater importance, to be faithful to God, and to save our souls by a holy and Christian life.—Thereby we acquire a kingdom, before which all other kingdoms and empires vanish : a kingdom which no revolution can shake—in which no change can happen—which indeed must *be taken by violence*, but which violence is only momentary and as nothing (as St. Paul says) when compared to that *future glory which will be manifested in us*.

For in that kingdom, described by Saint Augustine, to shew the Roman conquerors, who gloried so much in their triumphs, that their conquests were nothing when compared to the conquest of a Christian who triumphs over his passions; in that kingdom, the prize of Christian victory, there will be true glory, where there is neither error nor flattery ; there will be true honour, where it is never refused to the worthy, nor granted to the unworthy : there will be true peace, where man has nothing to suffer from himself or others ; where the most noble of all struggles, even the struggle of virtue, will be at an end ; and where nothing remains but the undisturbed enjoyment of the reward. The struggle or contest
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of prudence, will there be at an end, for in that kingdom there is no choice between good and evil, nor hazards or misfortunes to guard against. The struggle of temperance, for before admittance into that kingdom, all the passions must be subdued. The struggle of justice, for in that kingdom there is no temptation to injure or invade the property of another. Every inhabitant has millions of times more than he can either desire or consume. There is but one inexhaustible stock for all, and this great treasure is the immensity of inexpressible sweetness and delight, inseparable from the possession of the sovereign good: the struggle of fortitude, for in that kingdom there are no dangers to encounter. The harbour once made, there is no embarking any more on the tempestuous ocean. One victory gained at the hour of death, to which every foregoing one was a preparation, and the enemy is foiled for ever; the Christian soldier is never more provoked to re-enter the lists, but rests under his laurels, which never fade, in the midst of songs of triumph, which speak all sorrows done away. He who is the author of virtue, shall himself be the reward of it, because there is nothing better than he. He will be the end of our desires, whom we will see without end, whom we will love without disgust, and praise without weariness. A felicity common to them all, as well as eternal life. Wherefore all the inhabitants of that kingdom will have a will perfectly free, exempt from all manner of evil, filled with all manner of good, enjoying without intermission the delights of inexpressible

expressible felicity, without any remembrance either of sins or miseries of this life, otherwise than to bless him who delivered them from them, and put them in possession of life eternal. This, my brethren, is the kingdom to which we are all called. Let us not forfeit, by our sins, the glorious inheritance: and as St. Paul exhorts that *prayers and supplications be made for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all Godliness and honesty.* (1 Tim. c. ii.) Let us unite our prayers to the prayers of our Pontiff,* who is going to offer up the spotless lamb, who takes away the sins of the world, that we may lead a life of *Godliness, without which, according to the blessed Apostle, none will ever see God*, whom we beseech to preserve and protect these realms, and our most gracious sovereign. May the great disposer of all events, grant that his life be long and his reign happy—his senate wise—his forces valiant—his people orderly and virtuous—and may he enjoy every blessing and happiness which he can wish, as a man and a sovereign. *Et quæcumque tendunt ad Cæsaris votum.*

It is the prayer the primitive Christians used to offer up for their persecuting emperors, in the subterraneous places, where they met for religious worship. With how much more fervour are we not bound to pray for a prince under whose reign we have obtained the free exercise of our religion after ages of persecution. “Spare, O Lord! Spare thy people! who, though they have

* The discourse was delivered at the celebration of a Pontifical Mass, by the Bishop of the London district.

offended thee, yet hope and believe in thee, the living and true God, whom they beseech to avert the dangers which threaten them, and not to give thine inheritance to the infidels, who have profaned thy name, and abolished thy worship. Bring them back, in thy mercy, into the path of religion, from which they have strayed, and guide ourselves in that path which leads to the kingdom of the saints, and the inheritance of glory, purchased for us by the blood of Christ.

AMEN.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

SEVERAL gentlemen, some of them of a different communion, but agreeing with Catholics in principles of loyalty and their detestation of the disorders and horrors of which infidelity has been productive in a neighbouring kingdom, have requested me to publish the foregoing discourse.

The principal motive that induced me to yield to their solicitations, was the consideration, that whatever profits might arise from its publication would be applied to the benefit of that place of divine worship in which it was delivered, and which is destitute of every other means of support, but the voluntary contributions of the well disposed. Charity must ever accompany a minister of the Gospel, especially when the object is to administer the comforts of religion to those who are often bereft of every other consolation, and to procure to the ignorant the benefit of religious instruction, which humanizes the manners—reforms the morals of the depraved—and preserves the innocent from the contagion of vice.

Such are the effects produced by religious establishments. Effects visible in the conduct and reformation of the lower orders of the people in the vicinity of SAINT PATRICK'S CHAPEL, formerly too remote from any other place of Catholic worship, where, instructed in every civil and religious duty, many of them are become, instead of subjects of reproach and scandal, instruments of edification to their neighbours.

The revolution in France being the source of the calamities, for the deprecation whereof the late day of solemn fast has been appointed, and that revolution originating in irreligion, a description of the enormities to which it has given rise, leads to the knowledge as well as to the abhorrence of modern philosophy under the imposing name of
enlightened



enlightened reason freed from the shackles of superstition. This is the boasted *philosophy* which a Pagan poet, by way of derision calls the *wisdom of folly and madness*; because it induced him to neglect the worship of his Gods.* And of which Cicero, the most enlightened of the heathens, complains, for having driven by the allurements of pleasure one of his friends from the mansions of virtue. By what name is it then to be called by a believer in Christ?

But if we shrink back with horror from the deeds of darkness performed by irreligion on the theatre of France, we have to deplore the baneful effects of fanaticism amongst ourselves. What evils has it not brought in its train, from the time of John Knox, Peter Burchet, and other puritans, who called themselves the congregation of God, who commands the Godly to destroy those who oppose the truth, as Samuel slew Agag before the Lord, down to the time of the London rioters, who under pretence of destroying idolatry destroyed the houses and property of peaceable citizens, were on the point of annihilating the bank of England, and of burying the capital of the British empire in its ashes.

Although time, toleration, and the energy of the law, have in a great degree changed the wild and haggard features of fanaticism, and checked its pernicious progress, yet, from the number of persons who, so late as the year ninety-five, gave credit to the reveries of *Brothers*, (some of whom were preparing to sell their property, in order to attend him to Jerusalem; and, among the rest, an Oilman, who though he had sense enough to make a large fortune, yet was mad enough to think of going to the *Holy City*, to light up the lamps in Solomon's Temple, and a very respectable *Member of Parliament*, who wrote a pamphlet in vindication of the new *Jeremiah*,) it is evident that England has still its *Carmel*, where the race of prophets is not quite extinct. As numbers of them, on Buonaparte's threatening

* *Insaniens sapientia. Hor. Deorum cultor parvus et infrequens.*

Cicero, Epist. ad Cassium.

to march his army to Rome, began to prophesy the speedy destruction of the Catholic religion, and the end of the succession of its Pastors, it came naturally within my province to advert to their predictions, to shew their absurdity, though it must be acknowledged such subjects are better suited to a comic scene, than the seriousness and solemnity of the pulpit. But however ridiculous such prophecies have been, and must ever be, yet it is certain they have a tendency not only to mislead the understanding, but to give fresh-vigour to prejudices equally hostile to christian charity and civil society.

Should I only succeed in reclaiming one wicked man to virtue; or in correcting the errors of one man who goes astray; or in preventing the loss which one man may incur by his credulity, I am satisfied with having done some good. I have been actuated by no other motive than a warm attachment to truth, and the most earnest solicitude to contribute to the good of my neighbour.

A. O'L.

Warwick-Street,
March, 10, 1797.



